



**State of West Virginia
Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



OCTOBER 4 - 10, 2009 IS NATIONAL FIRE PREVENTION WEEK!

“Stay Fire Smart—Don’t Get Burned!” is the theme for Fire Prevention Week (FPW) 2009. Last year, West Virginia’s fire departments responded to almost 14,000 fires. Fifty-seven West Virginians died, many as a result of fires that could have been prevented.

To focus public awareness on the need for everyday fire safety and burn prevention in the home, the State Fire Marshal’s Office joins with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) in providing information about this year’s National Fire Prevention Week.

The special message for FPW 2009 is how to prevent scalds and serious burns. Not surprisingly, the very young and the elderly are at increased risk for serious injuries from burns caused by common household items. Scalds caused by hot water and other liquids, and burns from electrical appliances such as space heaters, lamps, curling irons and etc. are all too common---but preventable!

Here are some tips to keep your family fire-smart!

- **Check all electrical appliances and extension cords** to make sure they’re in good condition. Do not use damaged extension cords.

- **Never use extension cords in lieu of permanent wiring.** Items that pull a lot of power such as air conditioners, stoves, dryers and microwaves should have their own dedicated outlets.
- **Remember the 3-foot rule!** Keep a safety zone of 3 feet clear around any space heaters and stoves, away from upholstered furniture, bedding, curtains, etc. Always use a screen in front of a fireplace.
- **Take care with things that get hot** such as ovens, lamps, curling irons and heating pads. Use heating pads for no longer than 15-20 minutes at a time, and never lie down on one, or put anything on top of one.
- **Teach children that hot things will hurt them.** Smoking materials, electrical appliances, candles and similar items are tools for grown-ups only!
- **Keep hot foods and liquids away** from table and counter edges, out of reach of children.
- **Set the thermostat in your water heater** to no more than 120 degrees F. in order to avoid scalds. Remember that the young children and the elderly have skin that burns more easily.
- **Always test the water** before placing a child or yourself in the bathtub.
- **Never leave young children alone** in a tub, shower or near any sink.
- **If you have young children in your home,** have tamper-resistant receptacles.
- **Know how to cool a burn!** Put a burn in cool water immediately, and keep it there for 3-5 minutes. Cover with a clean, dry cloth. If the burn is bigger than your fist, get medical help.
- **Don’t forget your smoke alarms!** *Working* smoke alarms in your home can mean the difference between life and death. Test them at least once a month, and replace batteries at least once a year—use a birthday or anniversary as a reminder.
- **Consider using combination photoelectric and ionization type smoke detectors** for the best protection against both fast moving and smoldering fires.
- **Replace detectors** after 10 years.

- **Develop and practice a home escape plan.** Make sure your family knows two ways out of each room, a safe meeting place outside, how to call 9-1-1 once they’re out, and why they should NEVER go back into a burning house.
- **If you’re thinking about building a home,** have a **residential sprinkler system** installed. Next to preventing fires in the first place, sprinkler systems and smoke alarms are your best means of home fire protection.
- **For more** information on home fire safety, visit these websites:

www.nfpa.org

www.homesafetycouncil.org

www.usfa.dhs.gov

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